

Thursday, August 20, 1953

DUXBURY CLIPPER

Washington St. "Bitterly Opposed" When It Was Proposed In 1798

Dr. Rufus Hathaway (1770-1822), born in Freetown, was an itinerant artist when he rode a horse into Duxbury in 1795. To supplement his income he studied medicine under Dr. Isaac Winslow of Marshfield and became a physician, but art was his true love.

Or was his true love Judith Winsor, daughter of Joshua Winsor, whom he married in 1795 after painting her portrait? (The Rev. John Allyn performed the ceremony.) Thenceforth we hear more about the son of Asa and Mary (Phillips) Hathaway who was the seventh generation from Nicholas Hathaway of Dorchester. Among his paintings are those of the Rev. and Mrs. Caleb Turner of Middleborough and 18 other paintings, including portraits of Duxburyites, miniatures and one landscape. He was also a wood carver.

Rufus did eight portraits of the Ezra ("King Caesar") Weston family, and Graham Winslow of Standish Shore owns 3. They are the portraits of Sylvanus Sampson (died 1848), his wife, the former Sylvia Church Weston (died 1836) and their son Church Sampson (died in 1793 at the age of two). John Hathaway of Fort Hill Lane, grandson of Rufus Hathaway owns a picture taken from a self miniature of Rufus copied by Jer-

usha Faunce Hathaway, (granddaughter of Rufus). Dr. Abbott Peterson of Powder Point owns an overmantel picture of two peacocks which Rufus painted on a wooden panel that was once part of the woodwork of the John Peterson house on Powder Pt. When the house was razed after the Civil War, the panel passed to Mrs. Jane Bradford, granddaughter of Rufus, who later transferred it to Dr. Abbott Peterson.

Good Reading

The summer of 1953 issue of the quarterly, ART IN AMERICA, has an interesting article about Dr. Rufus Hathaway by Nina Fletcher Little, who received source material from Winsor White of Anchorage Lane, Dr. Abbott Peterson and his son-in-law, Robert Vose, Jr., and John Hathaway of Fort Hill Lane.

In her article the author says that when Washington St. was projected in 1798 by Ezra Weston, Joshua Winsor, Seth Sprague and Samuel Delano, they were "bitterly opposed by other factions in the town" (sounds familiar, what?) The courts upheld their case, but before the road could be completed it was necessary to build a bridge over Blue Fish River. This project was also strongly opposed by

a majority of citizens (because of the \$3,000 cost), but it was finally cleared and the bridge was completed on July 3, 1803. "On July 4th" says the author, "the bridge was formally opened with a parade and a sumptuous collation which it is believed went a long way toward restoring good feeling among all concerned. The bridge was impressively decorated, and a temporary arch was erected over it, for the top of which Rufus Hathaway carved out of wood a large and handsome spread eagle. The arch bore on the side the motto from Jefferson's inaugural address, 'Peace, Friendship, and Commerce with all Nations; entangling Alliances with none' and on the reverse, 'Commerce, Agriculture, Fishery.'"

Dr. Rufus Hathaway is buried with other members of his family in Mayflower Cemetery.